

2009

Annual Report of the Teaching Effectiveness Committee: Recommendation on Academic Advising.

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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THE
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Serial Number #08-09--20

TO: President Robert L. Carothers

FROM: Celest A. Martin, Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled, Annual Report of the Teaching Effectiveness Committee: Recommendation on Academic Advising, is forwarded for your consideration.
2. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on March 26, 2009.
3. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Governors, completing the appropriate endorsement below.
4. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective April 16, 2009 three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Governors for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Governors, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

March 27, 2009
(date)


Celest A. Martin
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

Returned.

- a. Approved ☒.
- b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors ____.
- c. Disapproved ____.

4 / 8 / 09
(date)


President

On March 26, 2009, the Faculty Senate approved the following recommendation of the Teaching Effectiveness Committee:

That the University adopt and implement fully the plan
(Comprehensive Plan: Advising for Student Academic Success from
Admissions to Graduation) and support the ongoing efforts of
University College toward that end.

The charge to the committee

The Teaching Effectiveness Committee shall promote good teaching at the University by: conducting and reporting to the Faculty Senate an annual audit of programs, activities, policies, etc., which are available at the University to support good teaching; serving as an advisory committee to the Instructional Development Program; undertaking each year, in cooperation with other interested parties, an initiative designed to improve teaching practices at the University. The Director of the Instructional Development Program and the Director of Information and Instructional Technology Services shall serve as ex officio members of this committee.

The members of the committee

Susan Trostle Brand, EDC
Kathryn Jervis, BUS
Jim Kinnie, LIB Chair
Rita Marcoux, PHP
Kathleen Torrens, COM Faculty Senator
Judy Van Wyk SOC
Bette Erickson, Director of IDP, *ex officio*
David Porter, Information and Technology Services, *ex officio*
Anthony Baldwin, Student Representative
Amanda Clarke, Student Representative

Activities of the committee

The committee met during the fall semester to discuss and analyze the results from the student focus groups on advising that the committee surveyed during the last academic year. We drafted a brief outline:

Recommendations on Advising

- Create an Advising Vision statement
 - Purpose
 - What URI wants students to do
 - Align students expectations with their experience
 - Automatic notices
 - Same system across campus
- Administration of advising after students leave University College
- Group advising (especially for scheduling)

Since University College has had a system for advising undeclared students for some time, the committee felt that it was important to hear from UC. Dean Jayne Richmond and Linda Lyons met with us and shared their Comprehensive Plan: Advising for Student Academic Success from Admissions to Graduation which is available in Appendix 6.21 in the NEASC accreditation self-study. An updated version of that plan is attached to this report. Although much more comprehensive, UC's plan came to many of the same conclusions of the TEC.

In a subsequent meeting, Linda Lyons walked TEC members through the advising module on ecampus. This existing system addresses many of the committee's concerns. Linda is

currently visiting colleges, schools and departments to see how services continue after students leave UC, to support faculty and chairs in using the Advisement system, and to improve procedures and communications to provide appropriate advising services to all students.

The committee recommends that the University adopt and implement this plan fully and supports the ongoing efforts of University College toward that end.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Kinnie

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING FOR ALL STUDENTS FROM ADMISSION TO GRADUATION

Jayne Richmond

Dean, University College and Special Academic Programs

*revised from 2005 plan, with 2007 updates related to the strategic plan, updated for Provost DeHayes April 18, 2008

Summary talking points

Below are the advising systems elements to be considered, in light of the strategic plan.

- 1) **Agree to some standards of practice for advising in each college.** While each college will have its own process and model of advising, we should seek agreed upon elements for all colleges to share in common. Each college should be charged with defining and describing (and sharing with others) the advising processes they use, including the management of academic records, communication with students regarding faculty advising assignments, and expectations for advising. Both students and faculty must be knowledgeable about these issues.
- 2) **First Year Students versus Upper Division Students.** Everyone has agreed that first year students have the greatest need for support and guidance, and that we all share in the responsibility for helping to manage the pathway for students' eventual matriculation into the colleges. From the first days of Orientation, to UC advising and URI 101, to transcript reviews and ultimately degree audits for graduation, each step must have integrity in the student record (consistency, efficiency, accuracy) and in our interactions with students (communication, availability, professionalism). Advisors must be available, information must be updated, records must be well kept, and all processes must be managed in a timely and consistent manner. We all know many examples where this process fails.
- 3) **Engage committed faculty advisors, college liaisons, department chairpersons, and Dean's offices in the advising process.** This includes timely identification and selection of advisors, reward and recognition processes, training, and a constant focus on effective communication. Nothing will work without top-down support and understanding.
- 4) **Use the on-line "URI Advisement" system.** Each college committed resources for the development of the on-line data management system with the understanding that it would serve students through graduation. This People-Soft system is now the only record-keeping method we use. It offers appointment scheduling, options for communication with advisees, all record keeping, and automated advising processes (advisor holds, prior approvals, transcript audits, change of majors, transfer to DGC, etc.).

Introduction

The role of academic advising in student success (retention and graduation) is clear: students who engage with advisors are more successful than those who do not. Still, we have not yet developed a comprehensive advising model that will support student advising at the level we believe is needed. The Provost has asked University College to help lead the effort for improved advising across the institution. Because student learning and success must be seen as a campus-wide initiative, it is important that all departments involved in advising be part of the planning and delivery of advising services that are effective and efficient. We will use our expertise in advising to help identify a plan that will allow students to navigate successfully through URI from Orientation to Graduation. In this plan we will 1) identify goals of effective academic advising, 2) maximize current

resources, 3) identify new resources needed to reach our goals, and 4) evaluate success in each initiative.

Our current advising services in University College and through the Degree-granting Colleges are adequate at best. We know from NSSE data and various surveys on student satisfaction at the University of Rhode Island that advising across the undergraduate experience is not consistent and remains an area of concern. There are a number of reasons why this is the case. First of all, while we excel in caring about students and being knowledgeable about what they may need, we simply have too few people serving too many students. Further, too many faculty are cajoled into this role. Many view their advising responsibilities as a burden, added to already full schedules of teaching and research.

Some faculty are simply more comfortable advising juniors and seniors, working more as “mentors” for career and professional advice; they are not as comfortable in the more technical aspect of advising. Good advising requires both knowledge of the curriculum and strong listening and mentoring skills. Advisor training can help make advisors more effective in both of these roles. Combined with a program of recognition and reward for faculty serving as advisors, this strategy is a way to maximize our limited resources.

Since first year retention is a strong indicator of eventual graduation, focusing on excellence in first year advising makes sense. We have been working on ways to build a solid advising foundation in the first year experience, but we must pay attention as well to how those services continue throughout a student’s undergraduate years. We need, for example, clear communication between and among Admissions, University College and the degree granting colleges, so that we can follow the progress of students and be ready to help them find solutions to whatever problem they encounter. Each degree granting college has its own unique model for addressing advising, and it is important that everyone involved knows how those processes work. We must be committed to maximizing current resources through 1) improved faculty and staff knowledge and skill in the advising role and 2) improved communication between departments/colleges.

Each campus office involved in advising provides unique information and perspectives that must be considered in a comprehensive advising plan. The degree-granting colleges (including ASFCCE), our colleagues at CCRI, Admissions and Enrollment Management are essential partners for University College in guiding the process in developing an excellent (i.e., accessible, knowledgeable and caring) advising model for the institution. Improving academic advising at the University of Rhode Island-- faculty advisor preparation, advisor reward structures, interdepartmental communication, and better data management--requires the diligent work of many people.

The goals and strategies below should serve as a guide for discussing essential elements of a comprehensive advising plan for the University of Rhode Island.

URI/University College Initiative: Develop a comprehensive advising plan for student academic success

Goal 1: Develop and design an advising model that is consistent across the University and addresses the academic advising needs of all students from admission through to graduation.

Strategy 1: Identify the leadership to coordinate with all degree granting colleges, University College, CCE, Enrollment Services, and Admissions to design a comprehensive advising model

Action 1: Under the direction of the Provost, convene a steering committee with representatives from each of the above offices to outline an advising model that includes standards for guidelines and processes.

Action 2: Seek endorsement and cooperation from the Council of Deans, the Enrollment Management Advisory Committee, and the Enrollment Services Advisory Committee to ensure that practices and policies are cohesive.

Action 3: Each Dean will approve the implementation plan created by the steering committee, which will include unique and specific requirements for each college, and which will then be approved by the Provost.

Strategy 2: Focus on first year students and advising in University College.

Action 1: All colleges will assign advisors to Summer Orientation who will then serve as the UC advisor for their majors, for at least one year, preferably two.

Action 2: Departments that do not have an orientation advisor (due to small numbers) will collaborate with the assigned orientation advisor of the compatible major, providing updated curriculum sheets and any other major advising issues.

Action 3: Whenever possible, first year advisors will teach URI 101 for their majors.

Action 4: Ensure that all majors provide the necessary number of advisors per majors.

Action 5: Develop group-advising approaches in and out of the classroom (living learning communities, URI 101, gateway courses for majors) **well on its way*

Strategy 3: Ensure a smooth transition from University College to the Degree Granting College

Action 1: Each advisor and liaison (see Goal 2, Strategy 2) will determine the process for student transcript review for transfer from UC. This will be completed in February and again in July. **working well across the board*

Action 2: Once students are ready to transfer, they will be administratively moved and the welcoming DGC will communicate immediately with students regarding who their advisor is and how to contact their advisor. We currently have a problem with the number of students who are not told they have been transferred, and still come to UC (some with over 100 credits!).

Action 3: Faculty advisors will receive immediate updates concerning advisees' contact information so advisors may send a welcoming and informative letter to each advisee, encouraging them to make an appointment for advising.

Action 4: DGC will use "URI Advisement" System to inform students about their college home (communication function). **uneven, but improving*

Strategy 4: A unified Advising Plan will be created across all DGCs outlining the advising process for their majors through to graduation (see Goal 3).

Action 1. Each Department Chair will agree upon and sign off on the unified Advising Plan.

Action 2. Each college will assign faculty advisors within their respective colleges.

Action 3. Each DGC will train faculty advisors for advising within their college

Action 4. All DGC will utilize the "URI Advisement" System (contact log function).

Action 5. All DGC will conduct an evaluation of the Advising Plan within their college.

Strategy 5: Create incentives (recognition and rewards) for outstanding faculty advising *worth focusing on

- Action 1:** Make advising part of the Tenure and Promotion process
- Action 2:** Add advising role to new faculty letter of employment
- Action 3:** Establish stipends when appropriate
- Action 4:** Include advising in consideration of sabbatical leave
- Action 5:** Establish protocol for release time
- Action 6:** Establish guidelines for University-wide (URI Foundation) Excellence award for advising with monetary reward

Goal 2: Engage committed faculty advisors, liaisons, and department chairpersons who will address the academic advising needs for their major/college.

Strategy 1: By April, identify faculty who will be advisors in UC, willing to serve a minimum of one year

- Action 1:** Provost will require that each college dean and department select and assign faculty advisors who are interested in and committed to the advising role in University College, for no less than one year, by April 1, for the following year. This time is essential for trainings to occur. *greatly improved

Strategy 2: Appoint a liaison for each degree college who will work 10 - 20 hours per week assisting in the advising process in UC *done

- Action 1:** The Dean of each college, in collaboration with University College, will appoint a part-time advising liaison to University College who will support the work of the faculty advisors.
- Action 2:** Establish job description for each liaison to include:
 - Assist and manage transfer credit evaluations
 - Assist in transferring majors from University College to each degree granting college
 - Assist with summer advising for continuing as well as incoming new and transfer students who do not attend orientation
 - Work with readmitted students;
 - Be responsible for communicating with their college faculty about any changes in policies or curriculum for their majors
 - Assist with training faculty advisors in their colleges to use the URI Advisement System
- Action 3:** Liaisons will be available at the very start of the semester to deal with "walk-ins" in their colleges. UC manages over 200 walk-ins per day during the first week of school, with only two advisors on staff. These students across majors need schedule adjustments and access to upper level classes that should be addressed by major advisors and departments. Liaisons are ready to assist in this critical time of student academic support.
- Action 4:** Liaisons will work with the Assistant Deans and Chairs to ensure that updated/accurate advising materials are made available to the University College advising resource website.

Strategy 3: Each Department Chair will assign DGC Advisors

- Action 1.** The department chair will ensure that all faculty who do advising in their college are able and willing to use the advising system.
- Action 2.** Each department chair will ensure that all faculty advisors have updated rosters of advisees and will assist in the communication with advisees whenever necessary.

Strategy 4: Peer advisors will provide assistance and support to academic advising *done

Action 1. Provide walk-in hours in Roosevelt Hall

Action 2. Provide walk-in hours within Living/Learning Communities in the residence halls

Action 3. Assist in URI101 academic advising presentations

Action 4. Assist with coordination and presentation of group pre-registration sessions

Action 5. Assist all UC liaisons with DGC administrative processes

Action 6. Assist faculty advisors in communicating with students

Action 7. Provide evening peer advising hours

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for advisors to be more knowledgeable and supported in developmental and prescriptive advising processes.

Strategy 1: Provide “mandatory” professional development for all faculty advisors in each college (including workshops, listserves, web sites).

Action 1. University College, working with each liaison, will assist in advisor training programs in each DGC.

Action 2. Each degree granting college, through their department chairpersons or each Dean's student services office will ensure participation in advising workshops.

*well on its way

Strategy 2: Require that all advisors and department chairs be trained on the use of the “URI Advisement” System.

Action 1: University College will provide training to each DGC (dean's office, student services), to department chairs, and to all college liaisons to ensure that all faculty are able to use the system

Action 2: Each Dean will schedule mandatory meetings for training on the system for all advisors, in all colleges, run by the college liaisons and when desired, UC staff.

Action 3: Assigned UC advisors will assist in training faculty in their home departments in the use of the system

Action 4: All faculty advisor assignments will be posted on the on-line system so students may use e-campus to make appointments and know where and when to find their advisor.

Strategy 3: Develop effective model for group advising

Action 1: Use major focused URI 101's and specific major-required courses as an opportunity for group/classroom advising.

Action 2: Enhance the URI Advisement System to further allow for the management of group sessions.

Action 3: Renovate classroom space in Roosevelt (room 20) to accommodate faculty group advising for all majors, including computers and projection system.

Action 4: Explore use of upper-class Peer Mentors to assist Faculty Advisors in group advising.

Action 5: Use Living Learning Communities to do group advising in the residence halls. *success

Goal 4: Improve communication and data sharing between colleges, enrollment management and admissions

Strategy 1: Improve the integrity of the academic record

Action 1: Policy concerning all prior approval decisions (currently decentralized) will be developed. Approved courses will be added to an electronic data base for consistency across the colleges. *new transfer services are addressing this and issue is greatly improved

Action 2: Degree audits will be used for both transfer to and graduation from each degree-granting college

Action 3: Each DGC liaison will ensure that transcripts are evaluated using the current articulation guide and the electronic data transfer system, so records are evaluated based on URI requirements, rather than specific college requirements.

Note: This is one that students would be eternally grateful for. Students often change majors and colleges which then requires a new credit evaluation. This is wrong, as given the agreed upon articulation guide, re-evaluation should be moot.

Strategy 2: Expand the utilization of the URI Advising Data Management System

Action 1: Set policy and expectations for all advisors use of the on-line system

Action 2: Hire a half-time person to assist IT to maintain and enhance the advising management system as needed.

**Increasing need for this*

Action 3: Continuously expand and improve the system to include more automated processes (lifting of advisor holds, processing change of majors, transfer to degree granting colleges, prior approvals for off campus study, group advising record keeping, and more).

Action 4: Aggressively work to sell this system to other schools so that URI can re-invest the money to make this flagship system better for URI students, faculty, and staff.

Strategy 3: Update curriculum templates and web pages for all majors

Action 1: Each Dean, with support from the college's UC advising liaison, will work with each department to ensure they have updated materials for advising guidelines and updated web pages regarding the curriculum, and will ensure that these materials will be distributed to University College before the start of each academic year.

Strategy 4: Improve the accuracy and effectiveness of transfer credit evaluations

Action 1: Admission and University College will work together to insure that new incoming and transfer students are accurately assigned to either UC or an appropriate DGC. **done*

Action 2: Each DGC will work within the agreed-upon time line for college transcript evaluation.

Action 3: Admissions and colleges will use electronic transfer of data whenever possible.

Goal 5: The advising steering committee will develop an assessment of advising services at URI.

Strategy 1: The committee will work with the Office of Student Learning Outcomes to design evaluation measures of advising across the university

Action 1: Identify what students should *know* through Academic Advising

Action 2: Identify what students should *value*

Action 3: Identify what students should *do*

Strategy 2: Each college will provide Provost with annual evaluation of effectiveness of advising strategies.

Action 1: Satisfaction survey

Action 2: Needs Assessment Surveys

Action 3. Evaluations of academic support services

The Annual Report of the Teaching Effectiveness Committee is attached.